

Roxbury Dec 4. A. [1837]

100 Monday Morning

PHELPS
MSS.

My dear Mr.

You letter of Dec 1. I received Sat. evg. Thanks giving day I presented to my people very freely my views upon the subject of Slavery. And I think that the immediate reiteration of that subject in our church would not, as far as my congregation is concerned, be promotive of good but would rather retard the progress of right principles. I may err in this judgment, but it is, at present, my unhesitating opinion.

I ought moreover, in honesty, to say, that from what I have seen of the controversy between you & brother Fitch I fear that you would present the subject in an aspect which I should regret. I do not suppose that our views upon that subject in the main, differ, & yet I think there are serious differences in the manner in which we should present the subject, & the spirit we should be likely to excite. I have

hesitated not a little in writing this last paragraph; but I feel that you will wish to know, & that I ought to assign, the real reasons for my decision. Hoping that you will be guided to act with wisdom & with increasing influence, in your self denying efforts for the oppressed, I am, very sincerely

your friend & brother in the Lord

John S. C. Abbott.

(Reply - Copy)

Boston Dec. 9. 1837

Dear Brother Abbot

I thank you most heartily for the "honesty" with which you "assign the real reasons for your decision" in regard to the subject of my former letter. The ground of it is, "what you have seen of the controversy between me and brother Fitch".

I trust, dear brother, you will not consider me unreasonable, if I ask you to be as explicit as you have been frank & honest. Allow me to say then, that I cannot determine from your note whether the "what", of which you speak has reference to the matter, or the manner, or both of that controversy. Will you then oblige me by saying whether the doctrines advanced by me in that controversy, or the manner of advancing them, or both together constitute the "what" of your decision?

I make this inquiry, not for the purpose of bringing you before the public, or of drawing you into a private controversy on the subject, but because I do "wish to know", & feel that you "ought to assign" not only "the real", but the explicit & definite "reasons of your decision". So doing you will help me, if in the wrong, to discover & rectify it, & if in the right, to fortify & strengthen myself therein. Hoping that we may both be guided to act with wisdom & with increasing fidelity & boldness in our efforts for the oppressed, I am

Yours truly for the slave

A. A. Phelps.

Rev. A. A. Phelps.
Boston
Mass.